

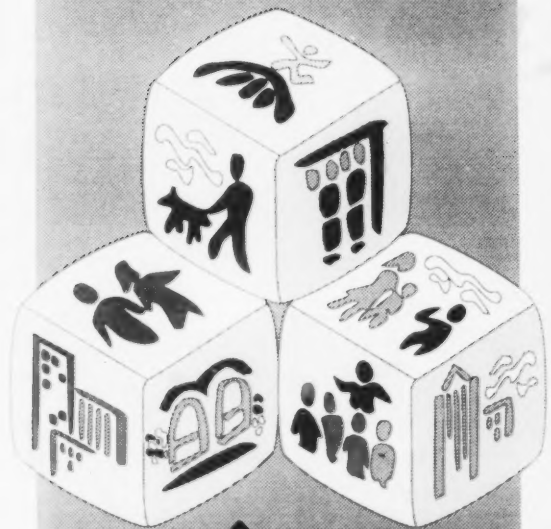
BUILDING BLOCKS

Housing Forum

MAY 5, 1998

Pantages Playhouse Theatre
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Proceedings



WORKING TOGETHER FOR WINNIPEG'S DOWNTOWN



For more information on
CentrePlan, please contact:

City of Winnipeg
Planning and Land Use Division
9th Floor 395 Main Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 3E1
Phone: (204) 986-2635
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The analyses, views and opinions
expressed in this document are those
of forum presenters and participants.

This document is also available on the
World Wide Web at:
<http://www.mbnet.mb.ca/city/centreplan/forum>

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

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To address housing in downtown Winnipeg, on May 5, 1998, CentrePlan hosted a forum entitled, "*Building Blocks*." The goal of the forum was to identify the opportunities for residential development and intensification in downtown Winnipeg and build upon actions and ideas needed to achieve that goal.

"*Building Blocks*" was attended by 240 people representing developers, property owners, government, planners, architects, designers, elected officials, heritage organizations, financial consultants, professors, housing consultants/providers, downtown business owners, students, non profit organizations and residents.

The one day program was comprised of panel discussions, speaker presentations and a round table discussion. This report documents the major themes, ideas and discussions of the forum. The summary provides the key areas of support and proposed next steps.

THE PROGRAM

The forum began with opening remarks from the Chair of the CentrePlan Residential Working Group, Toby Chase and the Chair of CentrePlan, Brad Hughes. They reviewed the goal of the forum and the broader objectives of CentrePlan.

The first presentation, "*Downtown Housing*," was made by Tom Carter, Professor of Geography at the University Winnipeg. He outlined recent housing and demographic trends in the downtown. He recommended that Winnipeg's downtown begin to provide more variety of housing options for a greater

diversity of household types and income levels.

The first panel discussion, "*Living Downtown*," was comprised of three downtown residents. They addressed the benefits and challenges of living downtown. Alan Shepard, West Exchange District resident, stressed the convenience of living downtown, but highlighted the need for a greater residential population. Erwin Malzer, East Exchange District resident, focused on the advantages of living and working downtown. He challenged developers, policy makers and community leaders to promote downtown housing for all income levels.

Linda Williams, West Broadway resident, outlined a variety of initiatives implemented in West Broadway to promote a greater sense of community and address the real and perceived issues of safety in their neighbourhood.



The second panel discussion, "*Steps for Success*," was comprised of three panelists who described downtown housing projects currently in the planning stages. Architect Dudley Thompson described a proposal for an Eco-Village at The Forks. He outlined the guiding principles and features of the project and described how its development will help to stabilize the downtown. Trudy Schroeder, arts and heritage consultant, introduced the concept of artist live/work studio conversions in the Exchange District. She covered the benefits of this type of residential development and the factors required for its success. Roy Nichol, member of the North Main Task Force, described the development plan for North Main and its housing component.

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transformation of downtown St. Paul, Minnesota and Hartford, Connecticut. He described the importance of creating a comprehensive development framework that is holistic and inclusive. Emphasized was the significance of creating a physical, yet flexible plan that provides something "visual" to go along with the "vision." He also outlined some important architectural and urban design features that affect the vitality of cities.

The final panel session, "Heritage Matters," was comprised of four panel members who spoke about the opportunities and obstacles of heritage building conversion. Winnipeg City Councillor Glen Murray focused his presentation on some of the practical and less tangible changes that must occur in Winnipeg in order to promote and preserve its heritage districts. He recommended specific changes

to building codes, zoning, tax credits, transportation and stressed the importance of a sense of pride and commitment to heritage in Winnipeg. City of Winnipeg Heritage Planner Giles Bugailiskis described the City's Heritage Programs. He outlined

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The final session of the day was, "Breaking

Ground," a round table discussion where participants broke into groups and worked through a series of seven questions. These questions sought to identify the opportunities and next steps required for achieving the goal of residential development and intensification in downtown Winnipeg.

THE NEXT STEPS

Throughout the course of the forum, and in particular during the round table session, several key areas of support and next steps emerged.

1. Participants and presenters voiced the concern that there is not enough diversity in Winnipeg's downtown and that it should possess a greater mix of incomes and household types. Two key next steps were identified:
 - Provide more housing options for people with middle to higher incomes.
 - Retain and repair existing housing options for people with low incomes.
2. Live/work conversion projects in the Exchange District received a high level of support and most participants felt there was a great opportunity for developments of that type. Several next steps were identified to aid their development:
 - Review building codes and create equivalencies.
 - Change zoning to encourage broad mixed use development.
 - Expand and increase tax incentives for downtown residential development.
 - Encourage new amenities and services such as grocery stores to locate in the Exchange District.
3. The creation of a comprehensive downtown development plan received overwhelming support and a sense of urgency. Next steps and principles for the plan were identified:
 - The plan should include the social, economic and the physical aspects of downtown.
 - A public/private partnership should be established to administer the plan.

OPENING REMARKS

TOBY CHASE

CentrePlan Residential Working Group Chair

Toby Chase, Volunteer Chair of the CentrePlan Residential Working Group, thanked the nine forum sponsors for their generous support and financial assistance:

- The Winnipeg Development Agreement
- The Royal Bank of Canada
- The Manitoba Home Builders Association
- The Winnipeg Foundation
- The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ
- The Exchange District BIZ
- Winnipeg 2000
- The Forks North Portage Partnership
- Tourism Winnipeg
- The Social Planning Council of Winnipeg

He highlighted two key questions to be addressed at the "Building Blocks" Housing Forum:

- Where are the opportunities in the downtown housing market?
- What is needed to support housing efforts in the downtown?

BRAD HUGHES

CentrePlan Chair

Brad Hughes welcomed all participants to the beautiful Pantages Playhouse Theatre in the heart of Winnipeg's Exchange District, a Canadian national historic site. At the turn of the century this was the liveliest part of the city. Winnipeg was booming with its population doubling from 200,000 in 1900 to 400,000 in 1910. It took another seventy years to add 200,000 more people to that population. The advantage of this slow growth is that there has been minimal economic pressure to tear down Winnipeg's beautiful historic buildings. This translates into opportunity for residential development in the Exchange District.

Hughes optimistically noted that with two

years until the next century, Winnipeg is on the cusp of the next fast growing economic time in its history. The next five to ten years are going to prove exciting with one of the lowest unemployment rates in Canada and tremendous new job opportunities. For the first time in a long time, companies are actually having difficulty finding employees. Yet, young people continue to grow up in Winnipeg suburbs, move out of their parent's home and then move away from Winnipeg seeking more exciting urban lifestyles and economic opportunities in other centres such as Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver. Instead of moving "downtown," they move "out of town."

The mission of CentrePlan and the "Building Blocks" Housing Forum is to determine how to create an urban lifestyle that will be attractive to people. Hughes challenged forum participants to determine what kind of urban lifestyle people want and what kind of urban lifestyle is possible in Winnipeg. Housing is part of what is required to create that urban lifestyle and CentrePlan is initiating a number of other projects critical to advancing that goal.



"We're looking at getting more people working downtown. We want more people playing downtown and more people living downtown."

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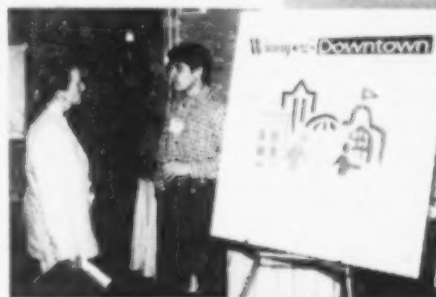
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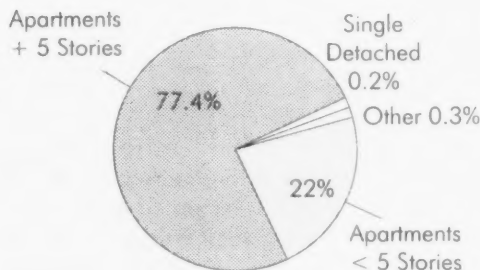
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Tom Carter's presentation began with slides of various housing choices in downtown Winnipeg. Underscored was the need to create a greater diversity and number of choices.

DOWNTOWN DWELLING TYPES



Source: Social Planning Council of Winnipeg.
Special Tabulation of 1991 Census.

Carter outlined several trends with respect to downtown housing options:

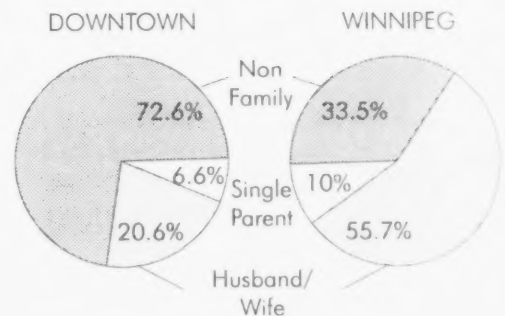
- an aging housing stock that must be repaired if it is to remain part of the affordable stock
- a trend from rental to ownership with condominium conversion
- loss of affordable stock with the conversion of older single family housing to commercial uses
- an increase in housing starts in the late 1980's as a result of the Core Area Initiative, with few recent additions to the

housing stock

- most housing built in the last 15 to 20 years has been built with some form of public subsidy, suggesting the viability of the private rental/ownership market in the downtown is in question.

Carter described several demographic trends and challenges in the downtown, beginning with household types. Currently 70% of households are non-family. There must be an attempt to get a greater diversity of household types in the downtown.

HOUSEHOLD TYPES



Source: Social Planning Council of Winnipeg.
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The resident population of the downtown is primarily low income. Almost 30% of households earn less than \$10,000 per year. This does not provide a lot of purchasing power to stimulate business growth in the area. A greater diversity of income levels in the downtown is needed to sustain truly healthy neighbourhoods.

Poverty rates are high, with 50% of downtown households living below the poverty line. Carter emphasized that this statistic indicates that affordable housing for low income people must be part of the mix of housing we attempt to achieve in downtown Winnipeg.

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70% of downtown household types are non-family.

43% of downtown households earn less than \$15,000 per year.

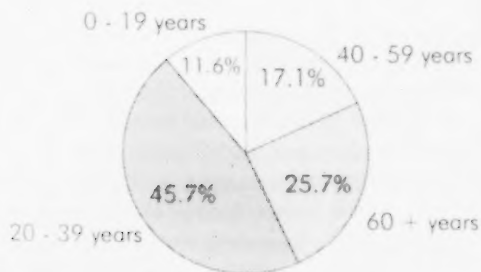
HOUSEHOLD INCOME PER YEAR



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Carter then addressed the market for housing in the downtown. With vacancy rates in Winnipeg at 6%, and even greater in the downtown, efforts must be directed towards increasing the demand housing. Ultimately we should try to achieve a mix of household types and income levels in the downtown but, realistically in the short term, it may be a niche market. There may be a market for the young downtown worker, the fifty plus maturing professional, the low income household or seniors.

DOWNTOWN POPULATION BY AGE GROUP



Source: Social Planning Council of Winnipeg
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Carter outlined several challenges facing the development of downtown housing:

- Downtown must provide an affordable, competitive housing product.
- Renters in Winnipeg are relatively low income households.
- Housing in Winnipeg is quite reasonably priced and 50% of renters can afford to buy an existing small unit in other parts of the city.
- Perceptions and reality of safety in the downtown need to be addressed.
- Downtown needs to have a greater sense of neighbourhood with amenities, services and recreation opportunities.
- It is difficult to engage in progressive planning in a slow growth economy.

Carter concluded that he has seen positive improvements in downtown Winnipeg over the past ten years. Changes have been slow and incremental and he challenged participants to develop ideas that will drive change more quickly.



"Our downtown is a vast geographic space. We have activities here. We have activities there. But they're not really connected."

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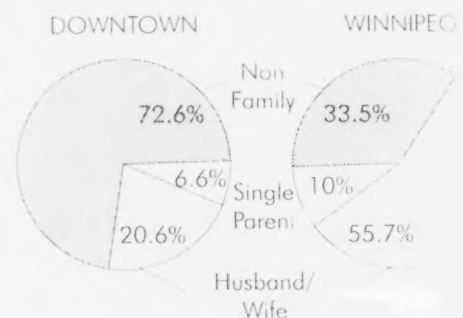
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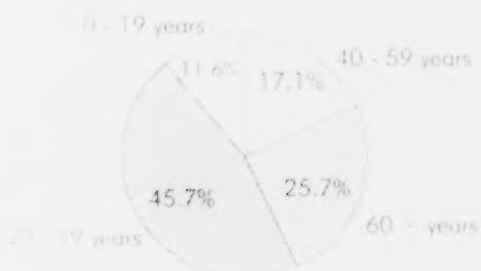
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LIVING DOWNTOWN

ALAN SHEPARD

Alan Shepard is an Exchange District resident and proprietor of Humbugs Christmas Store and partner in a new Exchange District venture, the "Stepin' Out Cafe."

Convinced in 1997 by the Exchange District BIZ to relocate their business in the Exchange District, Alan Shepard and his wife further decided to relocate their residence there. The two main reasons they moved into the district were convenience and character.

Shepard's home is a 4,000 square foot space with 12 foot ceilings and hardwood floors. He praised the unique character of warehouse living spaces, citing Hollywood movies that portray this type of urban lifestyle. Nowhere

else in Winnipeg can you find such accommodation, except in the Exchange District. Living only one block from work also allows them to function easily without owning a car.

To create a greater sense of neighbourhood in the

Exchange, Shepard stressed the need for more residents. He challenged City Council to believe in the vision for downtown Winnipeg and cited the "Building Blocks" Forum as a step in the right direction.

ERWIN MALZER

Erwin Malzer lives downtown in a converted loft and is Managing Partner of Coopers & Lybrand Consulting. He is the Vice Chair of the Downtown BIZ and sits on the Board of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce.

Erwin Malzer characterized himself as an "urban dwelling professional." His

presentation focused on the benefits of living downtown, especially for those working downtown. He stressed the following advantages:

- save an hour each day by omitting the commute to work
- reduce parking costs
- eliminate the need for more than one vehicle
- have lunch at home
- health benefits including reduced stress and pollution
- ideal for home businesses, because of proximity to clients.

Malzer highlighted the sense of freedom that comes when one is not totally dependant on the car for all activities. He outlined the benefits of living downtown with respect to recreation and convenience:

- year round recreation
- access to the river walk for walking and cycling
- numerous parks, plazas and green space in the downtown
- special events such as the Festival of Lights, Canada Day, the Fringe Festival, etc.
- close to the Exchange District, The Forks and Osborne Village
- ability to walk to cinemas, the Concert Hall, Pantages Theatre, shopping centres and restaurants
- close to the Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface Hospital
- 10 minutes to the airport.

Malzer also spoke about some of the challenges, noting that downtown needs more local amenities such as corner stores, delis, bakeries, gas stations and free parking. There needs to be an awareness that people are living in the downtown and that the area he lives in is not just a bar district. Downtown is no less safe than other areas of the city and there needs to be a concerted effort to change the perception that downtown is an unsafe place to live.

"We need a firm commitment from the City to encourage more residential development in the Exchange District."

Alan Shepard



"We need to alter some of the perceptions of safety downtown to match reality."

Erwin Malzer

Winnipeg needs more people of all types downtown. He challenged policy makers, industry and community leaders to not concentrate on any particular strata of housing, whether it be low income housing or luxury condos. If downtown is only made hospitable to certain strata of housing, all other strata will suffer as a result.

LINDA WILLIAMS

Linda Williams is a resident of West Broadway and is the Coordinator of the West Broadway Neighbourhood Housing Resource Centre.

As a resident and community worker in West Broadway, Linda Williams focused her presentation on initiatives to strengthen and stabilize that neighbourhood. Through their efforts they discovered the following universal conditions create a good place to live:

- safe neighbourhoods
- employment of residents
- houses in good repair
- affordable houses
- friendly neighbours
- close to amenities
- good schools
- green space

For the last two years the West Broadway Neighbourhood Housing Resource Centre has been involved in a partnership project, funded by Health Canada, with the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, the Andrew Street Family Centre and the Indian/Metis Friendship Centre in the Pas. The issue they have been focusing on in West Broadway is safety. The first component project was a safety audit conducted door to door in the neighbourhood.

The audit revealed that the greatest crimes West Broadway residents had been victims of were car theft, vandalism and domestic violence. Despite these realities, there remained an overwhelming fear in the community.

Their research determined this fear was based more on perception than reality. While Williams admitted there are real incidents of crime in West Broadway, she said they are not random incidents happening to innocent people just walking down the street.

When asked what kind of crime prevention activities and programs they needed in West Broadway, residents felt they required community police working at night, beat officers, a block parent program and further community awareness and involvement in the area. Williams explained that residents really understood the value of community involvement and its impact on safety, but didn't know how to achieve it.

Williams described a variety of activities initiated to increase that community involvement. These included the establishment of neighbourhood clusters or block associations, neighbourhood barbeques, neighbourhood clean-ups, community murals and community gardens. The Odd Jobs for Kids Project was established to get youth more involved in the neighbourhood and a Tenant Landlord Cooperation Project was started to survey and acknowledge good properties in the neighbourhood.

Crime statistics, research and the experience in West Broadway have shown that getting to know your neighbours has a large impact on perception of crime. As residents in West Broadway came out to events and began to know one another, they realized their fears were largely unfounded. Once perceived problems were dismissed, it was easier to begin to address the realistic concerns and effectively deal with them one by one.

Williams concluded by saying they are very pleased by recent crime statistics that indicate crime has gone down 18% in West



"From the safety survey we determined that the fear in the community was generated not from what residents personally experienced, but from what they were reading in the newspaper or what others were telling them."

Linda Williams

LIVING DOWNTOWN

ALAN SHEPARD

Alan Shepard is an Exchange District resident and proprietor of Humbugs Christmas Store and partner in a new Exchange District venture, the "Stepin' Out Cafe."

Convinced in 1997 by the Exchange District BIZ to relocate their business in the Exchange District, Alan Shepard and his wife further decided to relocate their residence there. The two main reasons they moved into the district were convenience and character.

Shepard's home is a 4,000 square foot space with 12 foot ceilings and hardwood floors. He praised the unique character of warehouse living spaces, citing Hollywood movies that portray this type of urban lifestyle. Nowhere

else in Winnipeg can you find such accommodation, except in the Exchange District. Living only one block from work also allows them to function easily without owning a car.

To create a greater sense of neighbourhood in the

Exchange, Shepard stressed the need for more residents. He challenged City Council to believe in the vision for downtown Winnipeg and cited the "Building Blocks" Forum as a step in the right direction.

ERWIN MALZER

Erwin Malzer lives downtown in a converted loft and is Managing Partner of Coopers & Lybrand Consulting. He is the Vice Chair of the Downtown BIZ and sits on the Board of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce.

Erwin Malzer characterized himself as an "urban dwelling professional." His

presentation focused on the benefits of living downtown, especially for those working downtown. He stressed the following advantages:

- save an hour each day by omitting the commute to work
- reduce parking costs
- eliminate the need for more than one vehicle
- have lunch at home
- health benefits including reduced stress and pollution
- ideal for home businesses, because of proximity to clients.

Malzer highlighted the sense of freedom that comes when one is not totally dependant on the car for all activities. He outlined the benefits of living downtown with respect to recreation and convenience:

- year round recreation
- access to the river walk for walking and cycling
- numerous parks, plazas and green space in the downtown
- special events such as the Festival of Lights, Canada Day, the Fringe Festival, etc.
- close to the Exchange District, The Forks and Osborne Village
- ability to walk to cinemas, the Concert Hall, Pantages Theatre, shopping centres and restaurants
- close to the Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface Hospital
- 10 minutes to the airport.

Malzer also spoke about some of the challenges, noting that downtown needs more local amenities such as corner stores, delis, bakeries, gas stations and free parking. There needs to be an awareness that people are living in the downtown and that the area he lives in is not *just* a bar district. Downtown is no less safe than other areas of the city and there needs to be a concerted effort to change the perception that downtown is an unsafe place to live.

"We need a firm commitment from the City to encourage more residential development in the Exchange District."

Alan Shepard



"We need to alter some of the perceptions of safely downtown to match reality."

Erwin Malzer

Winnipeg needs more people of all types downtown. He challenged policy makers, industry and community leaders to not concentrate on any particular strata of housing, whether it be low income housing or luxury condos. If downtown is only made hospitable to certain strata of housing, all other strata will suffer as a result.

LINDA WILLIAMS

Linda Williams is a resident of West Broadway and is the Coordinator of the West Broadway Neighbourhood Housing Resource Centre.

As a resident and community worker in West Broadway, Linda Williams focused her presentation on initiatives to strengthen and stabilize that neighbourhood. Through their efforts they discovered the following universal conditions create a good place to live:

- safe neighbourhoods
- employment of residents
- houses in good repair
- affordable houses
- friendly neighbours
- close to amenities
- good schools
- green space

For the last two years the West Broadway Neighbourhood Housing Resource Centre has been involved in a partnership project, funded by Health Canada, with the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, the Andrew Street Family Centre and the Indian/Metis Friendship Centre in the Pas. The issue they have been focusing on in West Broadway is safety. The first component project was a safety audit conducted door to door in the neighbourhood.

The audit revealed that the greatest crimes West Broadway residents had been victims of were car theft, vandalism and domestic violence. Despite these realities, there remained an overwhelming fear in the community.

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Broadway, due in large part to the beat officers in the area and involving the youth in the Odd Jobs for Kids Project. The initiatives and results in West Broadway prove that all areas of the downtown are worth working on and that positive change can be achieved.

DISCUSSION

- *Did the two panelists living in converted loft spaces have any difficulty bringing them up to code?*

Shepard said they were quite lucky. Most of the plumbing, electrical, fire exits and sprinkler systems were already in place. The work they had to do was primarily cosmetic.

Malzer said they had a similar experience, although they heard horror stories from the original developer about the hoops he had to go through to get development approval. He said the City has to streamline and speed up the approval process.

They have to be more flexible, because some code requirements just aren't possible when restoring an old building.

- *What is the radius that people will walk from home to work in the downtown?*

Malzer replied that people will easily walk a dozen blocks. With the covered walkways, even in the worst weather conditions, it is not an onerous task, but a delight.

- *Where do you think the biggest tenure demand is for housing?*

Malzer believes there is a great demand for condos.

- *Could you please address the issue of living downtown with children.*

Malzer admitted the presumption is that families with children will not be inclined to look downtown for housing, because of barriers such as schools and green space. He said this does not have to be a major road block to living downtown with children, certainly small children. In his case he lives within half a block of Stephen Juba Park and the entire riverbank property which is a lot closer than most suburban situations. Downtown has a Montessori school and some of the best day care centres. He stressed the convenience and quality of life associated with raising children downtown, especially when both father and mother work. In addition to commuting to work, as someone living in the suburbs, you are also tasked with commuting your children to daycare and various activities. Living downtown you have the joy of walking home at lunch and seeing your children, something not available to most couples living in the suburbs.

Williams admitted these issues need to be addressed, but stressed that whether in the inner city or the suburbs, children must be kept active and in structured activities. Children in the suburbs get into trouble if they are just left out in the neighbourhood to entertain themselves, as do those in the inner city.

- *Is there a sense of community in the downtown, like in West Broadway?*

Shepard said there is certainly a community with business people and people working in the district. There are a number of people living there now, but that number needs to be increased to create a greater sense of neighbourhood.



STEPS FOR SUCCESS

DUDLEY THOMPSON

Dudley Thompson is the principal architect in Prairie Architects Inc. and has practiced as an architect in Manitoba since 1976.

Dudley Thompson explained the proposal for an Eco-Village at The Forks. He has recently received approval from The Forks North Portage Partnership to continue with more design work and marketing of the project. His presentation covered the principles guiding the project, models that serve as examples, and some of the features of the project itself.

Principles - "The Eco-Village at The Forks is proposed to be a new paradigm for sustainable urban life in the 21st century with four guiding principles:"

- to provide a winterized, sustainable, year round community where people of all ages and economic levels can live and work; where residents can live in community with their neighbours, where children can play safely on indoor streets; where we can have an affordable and vibrant life that can begin to reinvigorate our city
- to use 30% less energy; all homes will exceed R2000 levels with compact attached housing and a central heating system
- to use 50% less water with low level landscaping, a rain water retention pond, and reduced flow fixtures
- to reduce green house gases on site by 75% with prohibited car traffic on site, use of solar electric vehicles and public transportation.

Models - Thompson described two developments from Europe that serve as examples for the Eco-Village at The Forks project. The first example is Ecolonia in Holland, a community of one hundred units completed three years ago. The development is organized around a central pond with a

variety of housing forms, each developed to highlight a particular energy conservation strategy. The second model is Jystrup Saavaerket in Denmark which is a co-housing community of 25 to 30 people. The development is organized in an L-shape with an indoor street in the middle, private yards on the exterior and common facilities such as kitchens and workshops.

Features - Thomson identified several design features the Eco-Village project will attempt to incorporate:

- create a new urban village with narrow streets, a community centre or core, common pond and greens, tight knit housing and no cars
- address Winnipeg's winter climate by clustering buildings around courtyards and incorporating an indoor street and atrium that connects all parts of the community
- include places for shops, offices and a demonstration site to show off the uniqueness of the complex and to showcase environmental building technology and "made in Manitoba" products
- provide public access through the middle of the site as a gateway to The Forks and the river walk way system
- encourage alternative transportation (solar cars on site, purchase a fleet of cars for cooperative ownership or a free bus pass)
- create a building form that is diversified, higher density, low rise, with private yards and possibilities for custom designed decks, gazebos and green houses
- utilize environmentally green materials and energy systems.



"For a city of its size, Winnipeg has the highest concentration of artists and artistic creation in North America."

"Artists need a community in which a variety of cultural industries and other artists can work together."

Trudy Schroeder

Housing units will vary from 600 square foot one bedroom apartments to 1600 square foot town houses. A variety of tenure is proposed including co-housing, life lease, condominium or equity co-op, depending on interest. Units will range in price from \$73,000 for a one bedroom, to \$150,000 for a three bedroom. In the next phase they intend to include the end users in the design process.

The development of the Eco-Village Project at The Forks will be a significant contribution to Winnipeg's downtown. It will help to stabilize the downtown by providing more housing options in terms of affordability, forms of tenure and diversity. Acting as a connection from the Exchange District to The Forks, it will also begin to fill in some of the gaps in Winnipeg's downtown.

TRUDY SCHROEDER

Trudy Schroeder is a Senior Consultant with Arts & Heritage Solutions, a Winnipeg based consulting firm specializing in cultural policy development, planning and project management.

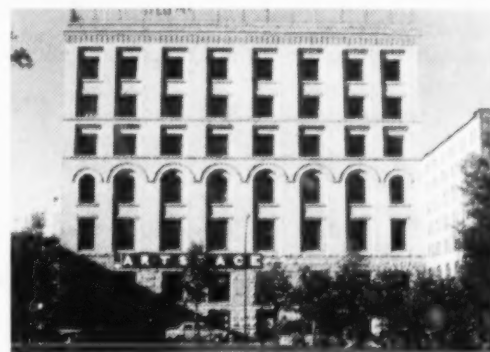
Trudy Schroeder spoke about consultations she is conducting which deal with artist live/work spaces in Winnipeg's Exchange District. She contends that this type of development brings together two great assets that are often taken for granted: the Exchange District and Winnipeg artists. If we don't use these heritage areas and address what artists require to live here, produce here and remain here, we will lose their contributions to our quality of life. The development of artist live/work spaces is part of the solution to this challenge.

Artists are often the vanguards in terms of redeveloping and revitalizing underutilized areas. Artists come first because they are willing to take the risk, despite concerns such as safety, lack of amenities and insecurity about how the neighbourhood will turn out. Subsequent to that initial risk, other commercial investment and tourism is drawn to the area.

In other cities positive changes have resulted

when heritage buildings are converted to artist live/work spaces. The key benefit is the development of community and urban revitalization by establishing a 24 hour a day human presence. Artists' productivity is also increased when they are provided with the stability of a permanent studio. Their presence brings energy back to these districts, and by providing venues for artists to show their work, the cultural tourism in a city is also increased.

The development of Artspace has had a very positive impact in the Exchange District by drawing other artists and arts organizations to area. As a result, Winnipeg is cited in reports as a North American leader in using heritage districts for the arts. This acclaim is something Winnipeg still needs to live up to and build upon.



Schroeder's research has found that several key factors will draw artists to the Exchange District. The most significant is good rental prices. The median income of artists is \$15,000 per year. Although this is a low income, artists are atypical in that the rental turnover rate is significantly less with this population and there are usually low vacancy rates in artist live/work developments. Artists are also drawn to buildings with high ceilings, good natural light, flexible space and neighbourhoods with people on the street. It is important for artists to be able to purchase food and supplies in the area. Once a critical mass of people is in place, other types of related businesses such as hardware stores, framing stores and book stores thrive around these types of projects.

There are approximately 400 artists utilizing studio space in the Exchange District. Many can't afford studios and apartments and are therefore living in these spaces without proper plumbing and heating. Schroeder urged that this issue be addressed.

ROY NICHOL

Roy Nichol is a board member of the North Main Task Force and chair of the Housing Committee. He is a professional engineer and recently retired from CMHC, where he was the provincial director for many years.

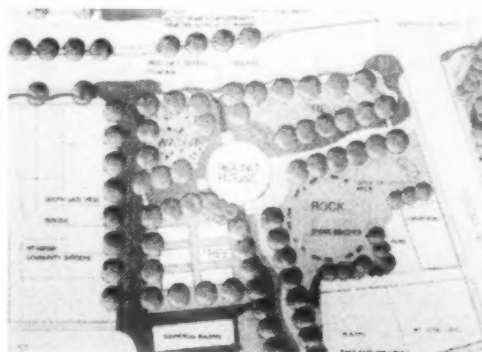
Roy Nichol stressed that the North Main Area is the birth place of our city. It is the original home of our aboriginal people and the settlers that built this city. The North Main Task Force is convinced that the area can be reclaimed and become a place where all cultures can live, work and thrive. He continued by giving some background to the North Main Task Force.

The Task Force was created in January 1997 and is co-chaired by Joe Bova and Mary Richard. The Task Force undertook consultations with the local and broader Winnipeg community and prepared a comprehensive plan, unanimously approved by City Council. The plan addresses the area bordered by William Avenue to the south, Higgins Avenue to the north, east to the Red River and one block west of Main Street. They are currently in the implementation stage of the plan with a commitment of \$6 million and are actively seeking additional funding. Nichol described the renewal strategy as having three main components:

- the physical and economic renewal of the area with a sensitivity to the neighbourhood surrounding, coupled with a social component to help the affected residents
- aboriginal investment and ownership of key elements through the establishment of Neeginan which symbolizes the recognition of the aboriginal reality in Winnipeg in all of its spiritual, cultural, and economic manifestations
- complementary partnerships and

investments by institutions, the cultural community and private investors to reestablish North Main as a safe and friendly area for residents and visitors.

Nichol continued by showing the site plan and images of the physical redevelopment of the North Main Area. Notes provided by Nichol outlined the four main housing components of the renewal strategy:



- 60 rooms for aboriginal students from communities outside Winnipeg and 30 short-stay apartments for aboriginal families in Winnipeg for medical reasons.
- The area south of the Disraeli Freeway has been designated as a mixed-use residential area.
- A cost-share program will be initiated to help private landlords improve the quality of rooms.
- A Relocation Assistance Program will help displaced residents move to new accommodations in the neighbourhood.

DISCUSSION

- When are these projects going to happen and what are the current mechanics of making them happen?

Thompson said they are embarking on a further planning stage and are organizing an open house at The Forks to allow people to express an interest in the project and perhaps even make a down payments on units.

Nichol said demolition work and street construction will begin in the summer of

"An artists community is not just for artists. It is something to draw the rest of us down to this area and be easily exposed to their work."

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Schroeder said there are currently a number of artist live/work projects waiting to happen once another few steps take place.

- *What will happen to those people that live in the buildings that may be torn down as a part of the North Main Redevelopment?*

Nichol said that a survey just completed indicates that most hotels in the North Main area are about 40% to 50% vacant. He assured there is no problem accommodating displaced residents in the other hotels that will remain in the same area.

- *The unit prices quoted at \$70,000 to \$150,000 don't seem very affordable for most downtown residents. Please comment.*

Moderator Steve Cohlmeier responded that the artist live/work projects will accommodate people with low incomes. He said that it is very difficult to build a new apartment building, without significant subsidy, that one can sell for any less than those numbers.

Thompson agreed that the Eco-Village is not a low income solution, but that it offers an alternative for people that are leaving the city or purchasing a house in the suburbs. He stressed that we need projects like this to start turning things around. If there are more options for all incomes it begins to stabilize the whole downtown.

- *Why could the top floors of the Eatons building not be converted to affordable housing?*

Cohlmeier said that it's difficult to convert a

building from one use to a totally different use. He suspects that with such a large floor plate, suites could only be located on the periphery of the building, or else a light well would have to be opened in the core of the building which can be very costly.

- *Where is the financial community in these discussions?*

Nichol responded by saying that on the board of the North Main Task Force there are representatives from the Royal Bank of Canada and one of the aboriginal lending institutions.

Thompson said that we have to look to the credit unions in Manitoba. They are the only ones that are really supporting inner city housing.

- *Where will elementary school age children go to school if they live in these projects?*

Thompson responded that it will take a critical mass of residents to support schools. It will be harder for the first group, "the pioneers," but as the downtown population expands it will enable the community to continue to grow with schools and resources nearby.

- *Will Canada ever have a social housing policy again that will help urban centres?*

Nichol said it's anybody's guess. Currently, the federal government is in the process of transferring social housing to the provinces.



THE RE-BIRTH OF CITY CENTRES

KEN GREENBERG

Ken Greenberg is a planner with the Toronto architectural and planning firm, Urban Strategies. He has managed numerous projects and studies for the public and private sectors concerned with the rejuvenation and intensification of inner city areas. His firm has won numerous awards including the 1994 Toronto Arts Award for Architecture and Design.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, North American railways laid out their tracks following a previous pattern of ports in the low lying flat lands along sea fronts, lake fronts and river fronts. Although they were responsible for the prosperity of cities such as St. Paul, Hartford and Winnipeg, they caused these cities to turn their backs on those natural features. For technological and economic reasons the location of these railways and ports have become obsolete and have opened extraordinary opportunities. Ken Greenberg believes the reconnection between the city and the river is a historically transforming moment in the life of North American cities. Downtowns in particular are redefining what they are, how they function and their significance within the city regions they occupy. St. Paul, Hartford and Winnipeg are at the beginning of such a transformation.

St. Paul Development Framework

After a 3 1/2 year community process the St. Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework was created. The framework sets out ten guiding principles for the future development of downtown St. Paul, Minnesota:

- evoke a sense of place
- restore and establish the unique urban ecology
- invest in the public realm
- broaden the mix of uses
- improve connectivity
- ensure that buildings support broader city building goals
- build on existing strengths
- preserve and enhance heritage resources
- provide a balanced network for movement
- foster public safety

Within the framework St. Paul is no longer thought of as a central business district, but as a place where all urban activities take

place. Fourteen urban villages are identified within a four square mile area of the downtown. Each performs multiple land use functions, including housing. Looking at the development of St. Paul in this way and at this scale helps to highlight how these urban villages are linked to one another and how future development can be mutually beneficial.

Greenberg explained a process whereby groups and individuals from the different areas came together to discuss their development goals and objectives. Forty-six different projects and initiatives were identified and then illustrated on one common map. Transportation engineers, park designers, individual project architects, municipal government and key stakeholders in the community then agreed on how these initiatives should be deployed within certain time frames. Reporting relationships, budgets and targets were established. Several projects have been implemented as a result of this entire process.

"It's all about the connective tissue of the city; the glue that ties various pieces together."

Ken Greenberg



"There is no silver bullet. There is no single thing that will transform the downtown. You need to do a whole bunch of things, some small, some medium sized, and you have to make everything count. Each building block must be made to link to the other."

Ken Greenberg
"Boom Town"
The Hartford
Advocate 1998



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KEN GREENBERG

Ken Greenberg is a planner with the Toronto architectural and planning firm, Urban Strategies. He has managed numerous projects and studies for the public and private sectors concerned with the rejuvenation and intensification of inner city areas. His firm has won numerous awards including the 1994 Toronto Arts Award for Architecture and Design.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, North American railways laid out their tracks following a previous pattern of ports in the low lying flat lands along sea fronts, lake fronts and river fronts. Although they were responsible for the prosperity of cities such as St. Paul, Hartford and Winnipeg, they caused these cities to turn their backs on those natural features. For technological and economic reasons the location of these railways and ports have become obsolete and have opened extraordinary opportunities. Ken Greenberg believes the reconnection between the city and the river is a historically transforming moment in the life of North American cities. Downtowns in particular are redefining what they are, how they function and their significance within the city regions they occupy. St. Paul, Hartford and Winnipeg are at the beginning of such a transformation.

St. Paul Development Framework

After a 3 1/2 year community process the St. Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework was created. The framework sets out ten guiding principles for the future development of downtown St. Paul, Minnesota:

- evoke a sense of place
- restore and establish the unique urban ecology
- invest in the public realm
- broaden the mix of uses
- improve connectivity
- ensure that buildings support broader city building goals
- build on existing strengths
- preserve and enhance heritage resources
- provide a balanced network for movement
- foster public safety

Within the framework St. Paul is no longer thought of as a central business district, but as a place where all urban activities take

place. Fourteen urban villages are identified within a four square mile area of the downtown. Each performs multiple land use functions, including housing. Looking at the development of St. Paul in this way and at this scale helps to highlight how these urban villages are linked to one another and how future development can be mutually beneficial.

Greenberg explained a process whereby groups and individuals from the different areas came together to discuss their development goals and objectives. Forty-six different projects and initiatives were identified and then illustrated on one common map. Transportation engineers, park designers, individual project architects, municipal government and key stakeholders in the community then agreed on how these initiatives should be deployed within certain time frames. Reporting relationships, budgets and targets were established. Several projects have been implemented as a result of this entire process.

"It's all about the connective tissue of the city; the glue that ties various pieces together."

Ken Greenberg



"There is no silver bullet. There is no single thing that will transform the downtown. You need to do a whole bunch of things, some small, some medium sized, and you have to make everything count. Each building block must be made to link to the other."

Ken Greenberg
"Boom Town"
The Hartford
Advocate 1998



"Take the amount of building that is going to occur and deploy it deliberately, so that instead of just satisfying the need for housing, office space, entertainment or a stadium, it acts as a strategic chess piece that contributes something to the overall design and pattern of the city."

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"There exists an opportunity for the paper (The Winnipeg Free Press) to get behind downtown development and the restructuring of the city. We need the people in this room, and others, to talk to us about what's going on and help us."

Nicholas Hirst
Editor
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Hartford Structure Plan

Hartford, Connecticut is a city with a decaying core, marked by an abundance of surface parking lots, holes in the urban fabric and a disconnection from the Connecticut River. It is also a city with great underutilized assets and the issues facing Hartford are notably similar to those facing Winnipeg. Greenberg spoke about revitalization efforts in downtown Hartford and its surrounding neighbourhoods.

Trinity College and other major institutions on the *periphery* of Hartford's core recognized they had to take action or they were going to lose the value of their investment in the area. A broad cross section of stakeholders came together to focus on the strengths of the community and create a precise and tangible pictorial for the future. The result was a structure plan, similar to St. Paul, which defines specific strategic places for reinvestment to occur. One area of reinvestment is the Learning Corridor, a series of magnet schools designed to attract residential development and provide connections between neighbourhood institutions. It is currently in the implementation phase and construction is underway.

Greenberg described another process where they worked with stakeholders in *downtown* Hartford to help them understand its underlying historic development and underutilized assets. What emerged was a strategic diagram that highlights the key connections, opportunities and missing components of the downtown. Through an employee and newspaper survey, it emerged that housing was one key development opportunity.

How to Make a City

Greenberg spoke about the morphology, or the form of a city, and how it contributes to a vibrant street life. He stressed the benefits of creating a more compact urban form. These common themes apply to all cities, including Winnipeg:

- There are appropriate building types in

different places. Buildings should not be random forms, but should work as groupings to create human spaces in between. A building that is out of scale or unsympathetic to its surroundings, creates a kind of "architectural violence" that is all too common in North American cities.

- Buildings that are too large for the growth of a city eliminate opportunities. Big sky scrapers, such as Fort Garry Place and the TD Centre, consume all the market for office and housing development in one concentrated area. The edges of the downtown and areas like the Exchange District suffer as a result. It is better to spread out density and fill in the holes of the urban fabric.
- Skywalk systems take activity away from the street, even in the most densely populated cities. There are more subtle ways to respond to climate, such as making more compact forms and creating pedestrian friendly environments at street level.
- There should be transportation choices and opportunities. By creating a more compact urban form people will park in one place and then walk or take a shuttle to several destinations within that area. Right now people don't walk, not because they don't like to walk, but because of the "visual misery of walking through a sea of parking lots."

Making it Visual

Greenberg stressed throughout his presentation the benefits of creating a visual plan that all stakeholders can understand. This approach proves to raise consciousness in the community and rally support. He showed a drawing done in 1992 by architect Ben Thompson. The drawing entitled, *The Great River Park*, was a fictional depiction of what St. Paul could be. This pictorial started a chain reaction of community efforts as citizens began to visualize a different kind of city emerging from the previous industrial pattern.

In 1995, *Greening the Great River Park*, a voluntary community organization, was established to reforest and restore ecological functions to St. Paul's urbanized Mississippi River. Their goal is to plant 30,000 trees along the river. Half completed, it has already started to alter the landscape and begin to respond to Ben Thompson's vision.

These kind of visualization tools have been used in the development framework for St. Paul. They have created a computer map of the framework which is continually adjusted as changes occur. They have also created a large aerial view of the city which is displayed in city council chambers. As proposals come forward, councillors can visualize how they fit into the overall plan. These tools help people see what the city is and what it is becoming. Getting the citizens of St. Paul to see the downtown, the river and the neighbourhoods together, not as three separate entities, has enabled them to forge alliances in aid of a common effort.

Greenberg concluded by saying that the work they did in Hartford and St. Paul is a whole new way of doing plans for cities. They don't resemble traditional land use plans and zoning by-laws. They are highly strategic and flexible, able to work with market cycles, different development programs and changes in technology. They are also guardians of bigger intentions. They are about connectivity and speak to all kinds of attributes of the physical place, with particular attention to the network of public spaces that tie elements together.

DISCUSSION

- *What was the mechanism used to get rid of the suspicion that tends to exist between civic officials and newspapers?*

Greenberg advised to make the efforts as transparent as possible. Reporters were invited to participate in all the sessions that occurred in order to give people a "play by play" account of how the process emerged. While the St. Paul and Hartford plans have outreach campaigns, they do not have the circulation or the power of the press.

- *How do you ensure that the framework is applied to all the activities?*

If the framework is widely endorsed, both formally and informally, this will occur. Once the framework was adopted in St. Paul the culture "shifted from the culture of the project to the culture of the whole place." Greenberg cited two examples where "out of town" developers interested in projects in the city went through a interactive design process in the city before the project was actually designed. Previously developers would design a building and then come into the city and quickly try to push it through development approval.

- *How did you get everyone together to say this is what we need to do as a whole?*

Bringing people together, face to face in a public setting, really helps. Dissent can never be totally eliminated, but progress can occur more efficiently if people begin to speak a similar language. A development framework helps do that.

- *What is the appropriate scale to look at these issues?*

We should always look at a city in its full regional context. At an operational scale, Greenberg has found it advantageous to look at the downtown, the natural feature and the neighbourhoods that surround the downtown. This serves two purposes. It begins to address the disconnection and linkages that need attention. It also helps overcome the false dichotomy that often occurs between neighbourhoods, the downtown business community and the special purpose bodies that are set up to deal with special redevelopment areas around river fronts. In Winnipeg, Greenberg recommends that the boundaries expand to include beyond North Main, the other side of the Red River and the western neighbourhoods.

Do you feel its important do deal with the social and economic problems before the physical plan?



"The trend now is to deal simultaneously with the economic, environmental and social issues, seeking creative solutions to all three at once. It is an iterative team process and a far more efficient and effective way to work."

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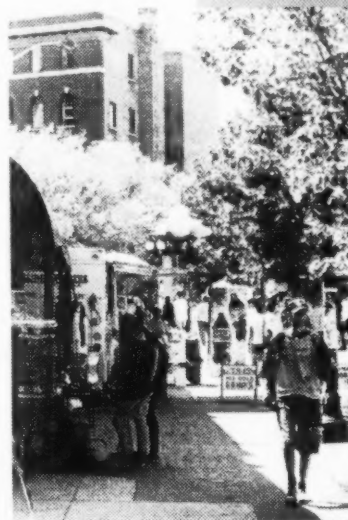
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HERITAGE MATTERS

GLEN MURRAY

Glen Murray has been the City Councillor for Fort Rouge Ward since 1989 and has brought his interest and experience in historic architecture and preservation to his role as Chairperson of the Historic Buildings Committee.

Glen Murray focused his comments in two areas: the practical and the less tangible changes that must occur in Winnipeg in terms of heritage matters.

First, Murray recommended that the Heritage Conservation Tax Credit Program be expanded to a fully non-discretionary

automatic tax credit. Second, he said it is fundamental that a one third government leasing program be established. This would allow the city to become a significant tenant and leverage further residential development.

Another immediate priority is building code changes. Murray cited Philadelphia's equity point system as an example. We need to determine the major costs of redevelopment with respect to building codes. Once those cost prohibitive code requirements are determined, equivalencies can be created. For example, developing a second point of egress in a building is very expensive, and many cities are beginning to acknowledge improved fire escape standards as an appropriate alternative.

The City of Winnipeg should adopt the European concept of village zoning. Vancouver, Seattle and Denver have adopted integrated mixed use development where you will see brew pubs, offices and residences all in one building.

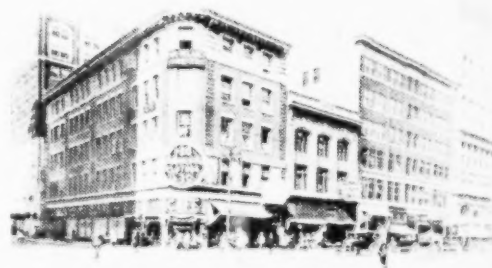
Winnipeg must have a transportation system that is supportive of heritage districts. 15,000 of the 35,000 parking spots in downtown could be freed up if, there was a user friendly and sustainable inter-downtown transportation system. This could include rapid transit, street cars, boat travel or horse drawn carriages.

When speaking of the intangibles Murray said that ethos, or the characteristic spirit and beliefs of a community, is the most important vocabulary when talking about the adaptive re-use of our heritage buildings. He challenged Winnipeggers to begin to realize that our heritage legacy is not mediocre. "It is our self esteem deficit that makes us chase the generic and abandon the unique."

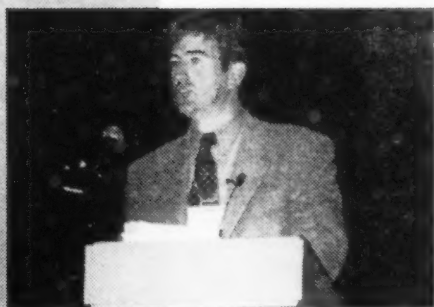
In conclusion Murray stressed the need to create mutual contracts and partnerships as governments, as residents and as developers. There must be a plan and a framework, which we do not yet have. He stressed the need for a public/private partnership with the authority to make decisions and spend money to really affect positive change in Winnipeg's downtown.

"What's missing is a private/public partnership or institution to broker vacant space with potential users. This will drive change quickly and effectively."

Glen Murray



"We need to create an equivalency system to remove some of the building codes that render heritage buildings almost impossible cost-effectively to repair."



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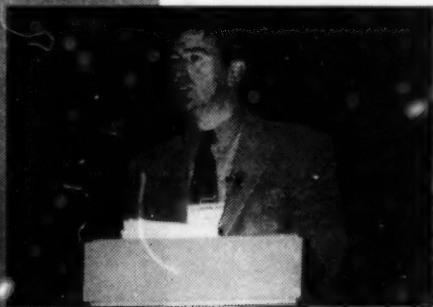
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GILES BUGAILISKIS

Giles Bugailiskis is responsible for heritage planning in the City of Winnipeg, working in the Property and Development Department. He has over 15 years of experience in heritage planning in Winnipeg.



Giles Bugailiskis began by giving some background to the City of Winnipeg Heritage Programs. In 1992 the City of Winnipeg adopted the Heritage Support and Policy Programs Report. It outlined a number of incentives required to ensure that the city's built heritage artifacts be preserved and rehabilitated. Since that time, amendments have been made to the City of Winnipeg Act to allow for heritage incentives and financial resources have been put in place.

The city currently administers two types of capital investment programs: grants programs and tax credit programs. Each program supports investment in specific types of work to repair, preserve, restore and/or upgrade historical structures. Priority is given to applications for buildings that are vacant or underutilized, at risk of significant deterioration or strategic because of their heritage value, location, economic or community importance. A proposed project may be eligible for funding from more than one program. Bugailiskis outlined the basic features and criteria of each of the City's Heritage Programs.

GRANT PROGRAMS

The first grant program outlined was the \$5.5 million Winnipeg Development Agreement Program 13A, Building Preservation Program. The first phase, nearing completion, has allocated \$3.3 million for repairs to stabilize, preserve and restore structural elements, building envelope and original architectural elements. Also funded were repairs or improvements to mechanical, plumbing or electrical, to meet building code requirements. There was no minimum or maximum with capital grants of up to 50% of approved costs, including a portion of eligible professional fees. Eligible applicants were owners and long term tenants of city designated historic structures. Phase two of the program, with \$1.6 million, will commence in the fall of 1998 with public sessions for feedback and suggestions for additional funding priorities. Some recommendations already voiced have been that passenger elevators in designated buildings should be funded and that strategic funding be available for restoration of buildings converted to residential use.



The second grant program, the *Gail Parvin Hammerquist Fund*, has three unique programs within it:

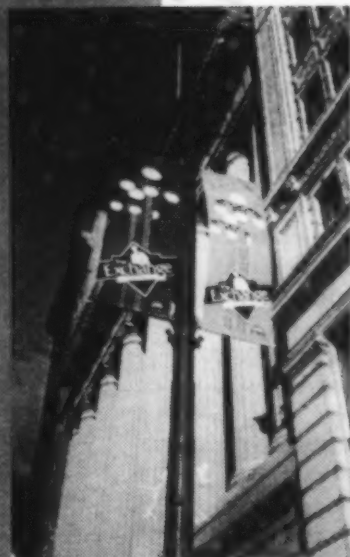
Capital Grants

- available to owners of historically designated buildings in the Exchange District or adjacent historic or character areas
- capital projects to repair, preserve



and/or restore a structure's character-defining heritage elements or work to make a structure accessible to people with disabilities are eligible

- funding is available for 50% of approved costs to a maximum of \$25,000



"Expanding the renovation tax credit program would go a long way in areas like West Broadway and the North End, giving people more incentive to renovate their homes and stay in these areas."

Participant

Heritage Research Grants

- available for research projects that contribute to the knowledge of Winnipeg's built environment
- directed research projects identified by the Historic Building Committee or independent research projects that relate to the Historic Buildings Committee's mandate and strategic plan are eligible
- funding is available annually to a maximum of \$25,000

Heritage Economic Development Initiatives

- available to projects that relate to the Exchange District or adjacent heritage neighbourhoods
- innovative projects to attract new investment, occupants and/or uses for heritage structures or areas are eligible
- funding is available for up to 50% of approved costs to a maximum of \$25,000

TAX CREDIT PROGRAMS

Heritage Conservation Tax Credit

- available city wide to owners or long term tenants of city designated historical buildings
- projects to repair, preserve, restore and/or upgrade designated historical structures are eligible
- the incentive is a tax credit for up to 50% of the net private investment in a project and is credited against City

property, business and/or amusement taxes for up to ten years

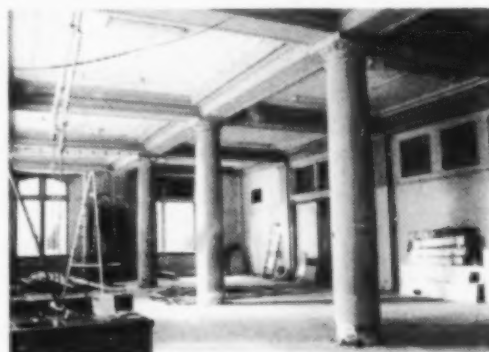
- approval is made through City of Winnipeg Council

Downtown Heritage Conservation Tax Credit

- available to owners or long term tenants of city designated historical buildings in the downtown
- available for a two year test period of 1998 and 1999
- projects to repair, preserve, restore and/or upgrade designated historical structures are eligible
- limited to ten buildings, five of which must have at least a 50% vacancy rate
- the incentive is a tax credit for up to 50% of the net private investment in a project up to \$250,000 and is credited against City property, business and/or amusement taxes for up to ten years
- approval is made administratively

For further information about the City of Winnipeg Heritage Conservation Support Programs contact:

Giles Bugailiskis *Heritage Planner*
Property and Development Services
Department
Planning and Land Use Division
901-395 Main Street
Winnipeg, MB R3B 3E1
Telephone: (204) 986-5390
Facsimile: (204) 986- 3694
gbugaili@city.winnipeg.mb.ca



ARCH HONIGMAN

Arch Honigman is a founding Principal with Dorchester Developments Ltd. Dorchester has been responsible for the renovation and restoration of numerous older buildings in the city of Winnipeg.



Arch Honigman's presentation focused on Dorchester Developments' experience with the conversion of heritage buildings. While Dorchester has primarily taken advantage of provincial grant money to renovate heritage apartment buildings in Winnipeg, they have also explored the possibility of converting their commercial heritage buildings to residential use.

Honigman stressed there is a demand for warehouse apartments in the Exchange District, citing the fact that he gets approximately 20 calls a month from people wanting that kind of space. These inquiries are primarily from students, musicians and artists who want about 800 square feet for \$400 to \$500 a month. When they looked at renovating these buildings they discovered there are a number of serious problems that need to be addressed.

Strict building and fire codes, upgrading of building mechanical systems and parking for residents are significant barriers. Several tough questions must be answered. Will the apartment market rents be enough to cover the unknown operating costs? Will financial institutions be ready and willing to finance rental projects in the Exchange District? Without any other private rental projects in the area to compare with, answering these

questions is quite difficult.

Even with significant city matching grants, Honigman has a hard time convincing property owners he manages for to upgrade their buildings. They say that taxes and utilities are too high, rents are too low and they are not making a profit.

Honigman concluded by saying that above all else, the Exchange District must develop a kind of street life that will be really attractive to prospective residents. He challenged the City to create tax and grant incentives for small restaurants and businesses to open in the area. If that were in place, and with proper marketing, people would be willing to pay a premium to live in the area.

SUSAN TURNER

Susan Turner is a restoration architect with Smith Carter Architects and Engineers. She is on the board of the City of Winnipeg Historic Buildings Committee, Heritage Winnipeg and the Exchange District Heritage Interpretive Plan.



Susan Turner focused on a case study proposal for the renovation and adaptive reuse of the Kay Building, built in 1892 and expanded in 1900. It's a four story building with 6,000 square feet per floor. It is bounded by King Street on the west, Arthur Street to the east, McDermot Avenue on the south and a lane way on the north. Her proposal is for a mixed use loft style condominium where the units are provided with the bare essentials such as electricity, water and sewer. Once the unit has been

"I believe there is a market for warehouse residential development in the Exchange District."

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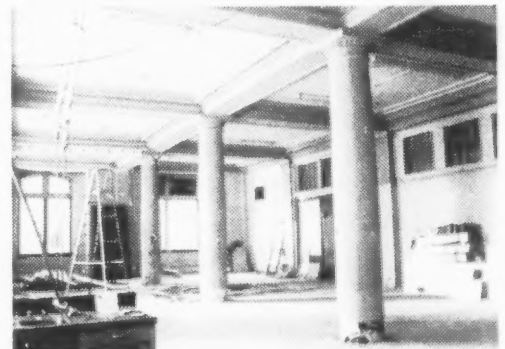
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Strict building and fire codes, upgrading of building mechanical systems and parking for residents are significant barriers. Several tough questions must be answered. Will the apartment market rents be enough to cover the unknown operating costs? Will financial institutions be ready and willing to finance rental projects in the Exchange District? Without any other private rental projects in the area to compare with, answering these

questions is quite difficult.

Even with significant city matching grants, Honigman has a hard time convincing property owners he manages for to upgrade their buildings. They say that taxes and utilities are too high, rents are too low and they are not making a profit.

Honigman concluded by saying that above all else, the Exchange District must develop a kind of street life that will be really attractive to prospective residents. He challenged the City to create tax and grant incentives for small restaurants and businesses to open in the area. If that were in place, and with proper marketing, people would be willing to pay a premium to live in the area.

SUSAN TURNER

Susan Turner is a restoration architect with Smith Carter Architects and Engineers. She is on the board of the City of Winnipeg Historic Buildings Committee, Heritage Winnipeg and the Exchange District Heritage Interpretive Plan.



Susan Turner focused on a case study proposal for the renovation and adaptive reuse of the Kay Building, built in 1892 and expanded in 1900. It's a four story building with 6,000 square feet per floor. It is bounded by King Street on the west, Arthur Street to the east, McDermot Avenue on the south and a lane way on the north. Her proposal is for a mixed use loft style condominium where the units are provided with the bare essentials such as electricity, water and sewer. Once the unit has been

"I believe there is a market for warehouse residential development in the Exchange District."

Arch Honigman



purchased, it is the responsibility of the owner to configure the space.

Turner stressed the need to choose a building that works. She outlined some factors that make the Kay Building very suitable for conversion:

- The small floor plate with windows on three sides of the building allows for easier conversion to a residential use.
- The floor to ceiling height is 14 feet.
- The structural capacity of the building is great with joists 2x6 or 2x8 at 2 inches on center. This is important for better acoustics and allows for an almost limitless load capacity.
- The building is surrounded on three sides by public streets and has excellent access, especially for fire fighting.

Turner also outlined how she addresses some of the challenges with the building. First, because the Kay Building is four stories, the building code requires that sprinklers must be installed. Although there is a high cost associated with that, there is also a significant marketing opportunity with the higher safety. Second, the first floor of the Kay Building is six feet from the ground and allows for the construction of a ramp to fourteen parking spaces underground. The ramp is proposed for the lane way side of the building so it does not destroy the historic facades. Third, the windows on the building need to be improved. Rather than totally replacing the windows, the wooden casements can be refurbished cost effectively while maintaining a comparable insulation value. This decreases the amount of waste in land fills and is more desirable for historic accuracy. Finally, the masonry of the building needs cleaning, the mortar needs repointing, and some of the sandstone details need to be repaired.

Turner concluded by outlining the costs of the project which include a new mechanical system that provides both heating and cooling. The total costs were \$1.2 million or \$54 per square foot. Based on a one or two

bedroom condominium, the per unit price would be approximately \$75,000. Taking advantage of the City of Winnipeg heritage programs could reduce the per unit cost to \$60,000. If a per unit incentive were adopted, or if they were to take advantage of and receive the maximum tax credit, the cost per unit would be even less.

DISCUSSION

Why does the city have tax credit program for new homes?

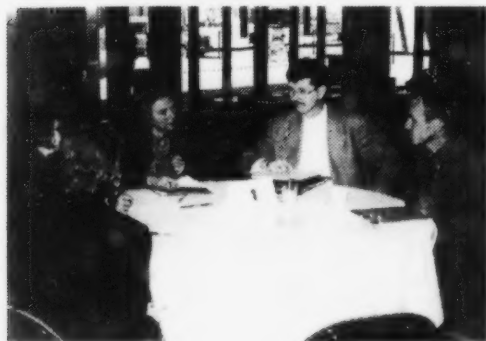
Murray said the new homeowner tax credit program is not a good idea and does nothing to encourage a more compact form of the city. A review of the program found it costs the city \$3 million dollars per year in perpetuity. He recommended the money would be better spent by implementing a per unit incentive similar to a program in Edmonton and other cities.



BREAKING GROUND

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

The final session of "Building Blocks" was a roundtable discussion where participants worked through a series of questions and options. The following is a summary of the results.



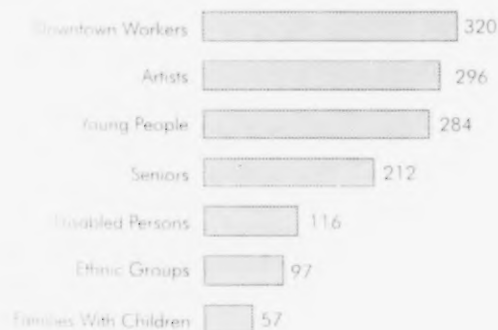
QUESTION 1.

Market Opportunities

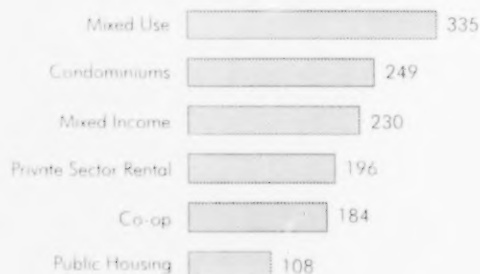
Based on your understanding of who presently lives in the downtown and recent trends in downtown housing, where is the best opportunity for the development of the downtown housing market?

Participants were asked to rank the top five options in order from 1 to 5, with 1 being the least opportunity and 5 being the greatest opportunity.

Results indicate that the top three opportunities for development are with downtown workers, artists and young people.



Results indicate the top three opportunities for development are mixed use, mixed income and condominium developments.



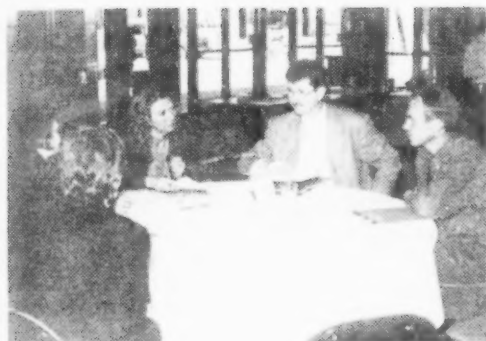
Note: Graphs indicate the total ranking assigned to each option.



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Participants also felt there are opportunities for live/work developments, in particular the concept of bare interiors with the option of personal retrofitting.



Note: Graphs indicate the total ranking assigned to each option.

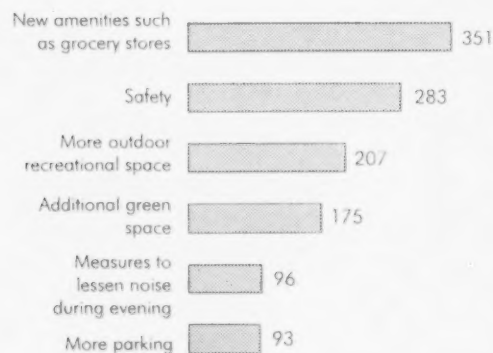
QUESTION 2.

Conditions to Address

It has been suggested that a number of conditions in the downtown would need to be addressed to improve the downtown housing market. These conditions relate to quality of life issues for those living in the downtown. Which of the following conditions would have the greatest impact on making the downtown a more attractive option?

Participants were asked to rank the top five options in order from 1 to 5, with 1 being the least impact and 5 being the greatest impact.

Results indicate the top two conditions that need to be addressed are amenities and safety. Third is more outdoor recreational space.



Other comments around this question included a belief that the establishment of schools and community services in the downtown is critical to expanding the housing market. Many felt that public transportation connections in the downtown need to be improved to encourage more housing. Overwhelmingly, participants believed that increasing the number of people downtown will have the biggest impact on making it a more attractive option for business and housing.

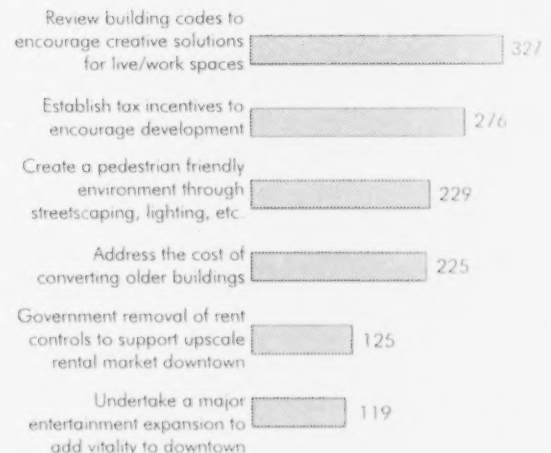
QUESTION 3.

Important Actions

The slow growth of Winnipeg's population combined with the traditional appeal of living outside the downtown (e.g. affordable housing prices, privacy, quiet lifestyle, recreational amenities) present a challenge for Winnipeg's downtown. Indicate the level of importance of the following actions in a plan to encourage new housing in the downtown.

Participants were asked to rank the top five options in order from 1 to 5, with 1 being the least important and 5 being the most important.

Results indicate the top two actions to encourage new housing in the downtown are to review building codes to encourage creative solutions for live/work spaces and to establish tax incentives to encourage development.



Discussion surrounding this question also focused on the need to address the social issues in the downtown and coordinate planning efforts.

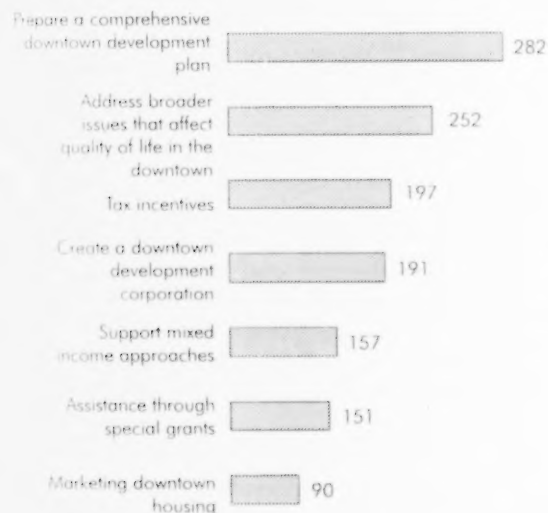
QUESTION 4.

Public Sector Role

The private sector/investors and others have stated that political will is required to restore the vibrancy of the downtown. What is the optimum role to be played by the public sector to encourage new housing in the downtown?

Participants were asked to rank the top five options in order from 1 to 5, with 1 being the least required role and 5 being the most required role.

Results indicate the top two optimum public sector roles to encourage new housing in the downtown are to address broader issues that affect quality of life in the downtown and create a comprehensive downtown development plan. Offering tax incentives and creating a downtown development corporation were also seen as important roles.



In addition, participants expressed that the City must make a real commitment to downtown. Many felt that government should begin to tax suburban residents an amount that truly reflects the cost of living in those areas with respect to public services and infrastructure. There was also discussion around targeting tax incentives for certain sectors of development such as seniors, disabled people, low-income people and artists.

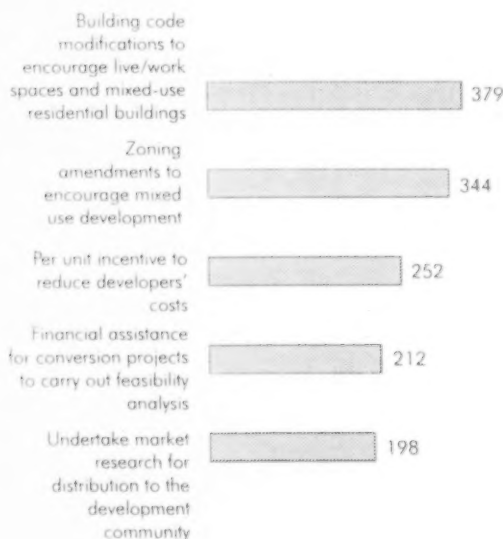
QUESTION 5.

Proposed CentrePlan Actions

Indicate your level of support for each of the following actions being proposed by CentrePlan to encourage new housing in the downtown.

Participants were asked to rank the top 5 options in order from 1 to 5, with 1 being the least supported role and 5 being the most supported role.

Results indicate the top two proposed CentrePlan actions, supported by participants, are zoning amendments to encourage mixed use development and building code modifications to encourage live/work spaces and mixed use residential buildings.



QUESTION 6.

Exciting Forum Ideas

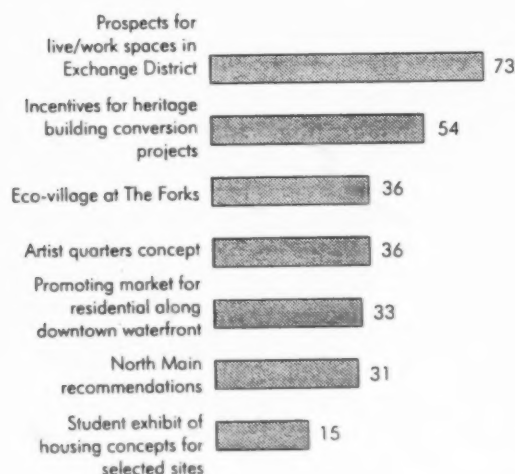
What is the most exciting idea that has come forward in today's housing forum?

Each participant was asked to select three.

The results indicate that the most exciting idea brought forth at the forum was the development of live/work spaces in the



Exchange District. Following that were the incentives for heritage building conversion, Eco-Village at The Forks and the artists quarters concept.



Other comments and discussion around this question included an overwhelming support for Ken Greenberg's multi-faceted strategy and planning approach for downtown urban development. Participants also voiced their support for community housing initiatives in West Broadway and the abolishment of suburban development subsidies.

QUESTION 7.

The First Initiative

In this question participants were asked to *identify the first initiative that should be pursued to have the greatest impact on downtown housing. They were then instructed to write the newspaper headline launching this initiative.*

Comprehensive Plan for Viable Downtown Housing

Housing Corporation Puts Jam in Donut "Heart of City a Sweet Place to Live"

Winnipeggers Say to Our Leaders: Lead, Follow or Get Out of the Way

50 Ways to Live Downtown

Downtown Life More Exciting at Less Cost - Corporate Support on the Way!

- Develop an urban design vision that capitalizes on Winnipeg's unique features and becomes a framework for community action co-ordinated by a public/private partnership.

The Government Institutes a Community Reinvestment Act Forcing Financial Institutions to Reinvest in the Core Area

Heritage Housing Conversion Incentives Create \$40 million in Downtown Investment

Colleges & Universities Initiate Downtown Campus: Inner City Housing Demand Projected

- Attracting educational facilities to the downtown will have positive impact on business and housing development.

Governments Announce Financial Incentive Package to Improve and Increase Downtown Housing

Downtown Action Plan Launched: Housing, Transportation, Economic & Social Needs

- The action plan should be a comprehensive, concrete development plan that integrates social/economic/environmental components with principles and values supported by all levels of government and citizens

Citizens Blow-Up Skywalks, Restore Street Cars!

Winnipeg to Fund 20,000 Immigrants to Live Downtown

New Grocer in Exchange - Harry's Foods Expands

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